

Exhibit 43

The Department of Internal Affairs

Te Tari Taiwhenua | Department of Internal Affairs

Building a safe, prosperous and respected nation

New Zealand led international operation into online child sexual abuse material leads to 46 arrests across New Zealand

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An international operation led by Te Tari Taiwhenua Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) has identified more than 90,000 online accounts that have possessed or traded child sexual abuse material.

Operation H was launched in October 2019 by DIA's Digital Child Exploitation Team following an alert from an Electronic Service Provider who had found tens of thousands of offenders using the platform to share some of the most horrific and devastating child sexual abuse material online.

This has been the largest and most challenging online child exploitation operation led out of New Zealand.

To carry out this Operation, DIA brought together international law enforcement agencies including the FBI, the Australian Federal Police, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the National Crime Agency in the UK, Europol and INTERPOL, as well as NZ Police and New Zealand Customs Service to establish a co-ordinated approach to identifying and investigating individuals tied to these accounts.

What followed was hundreds of investigations, commenced across the world.

From February 2020 onwards DIA and NZ Police, along with intelligence assistance from New Zealand Customs Service, undertook warrants and prosecutions into the New Zealand based offenders.

To date 125 New Zealand based accounts have been identified as part of the investigation. Due to the number of user accounts identified and the extreme egregious nature of the child sexual abuse material involved, this is the most significant joint child sexual exploitation operation conducted within New Zealand.

Tim Houston, Manager Digital Child Exploitation Team, and lead for Operation H highlighted how this operation and the prosecutions that will follow represent a major success in international efforts to undermine and disestablish the environments and networks that seek to exploit children.

“I commend the ongoing support of our law enforcement partners domestically and across the world for their dedication

and hard-work. This operation will have an impact on the global networks that deal in the most horrific and damaging material, and we are extraordinarily proud of the effect it will have on children's lives around the world."

He also noted the real-world consequences of this sort of offending.

"Many people who view material of this kind will go on to physically offend against children, it is imperative that we are able to bring them to justice before they are able to do more damage. This is not a victimless crime, every time this material is viewed, that child is revictimized."

Houston went on to highlight the importance of collaboration in an operation like this.

"This is one of the largest investigations of online child sexual abuse conducted in the Department's history. I applaud the great work of our partner agencies in NZ Police and New Zealand Customs Service for their continued support. This is yet another excellent example of cross agency collaboration in Aotearoa. I cannot express the importance that the joint agency cooperation had on an operation of this scale."

As part of this operation the Digital Child Exploitation Team seized and examined hundreds of thousands of child abuse material files. The child sexual abuse material at the core of this investigation is some of the most egregious investigators have been exposed to. Many of the children featured in the images and videos were just infants who were exposed to obvious and intentional pain and suffering.

The two-year long operation has also produced the following results:

- 46 New Zealand based individuals arrested
- 836 cases investigated internationally
- 146 children safeguarded internationally

This Operation serves as a warning to other offenders preying on children online and distributing child exploitation material, that this will not be tolerated in New Zealand. DIA, NZ Police and New Zealand Customs Service will continue to prosecute to the fullest extent of the law and individuals who create, view and distribute this type of material will be found and held to account for their offending.

If you are concerned that something you have seen may be objectionable or want to report a crime, you can report it to the [Digital Child Exploitation team at DIA](#).

If you are the victim of a child abuse or sexual abuse crime call [Safe to Talk](#): 0800 044 334 Text 4334

Or access the [Child Abuse: Directory for information and support](#)

If you are concerned about a child or young person who could be a victim of abuse call [Police on 105](#) or provide information to Police via [Crimestoppers](#) on 0800 555 111. You can also contact [Oranga Tamariki](#) on 0508 FAMILY (0508

326 459).

If you are concerned about your own activity online or someone else’s sexual behaviour, you should contact organisations such as:

- [Safe Network](#): 09 377 9898
- [WellStop](#): 04 566 4745
- [STOP](#): 03 353 0257

Or local treatment providers, or specialist therapists.

The Department of Internal Affairs uses the term child sexual abuse imagery. The term child pornography downplays the harm of child sexual abuse.

ENDS

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